

INFO	LOG-00	EEB-00	AGRE-00	AID-00	AIT-00	INL-00	C-00
	DOYE-00	PERC-00	PDI-00	DS-00	E-00	FAAE-00	FBIE-00
	VCI-00	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	MOFM-00	MOF-00	VCIE-00
	DCP-00	NSAE-00	OES-00	NIMA-00	MA-00	FMPC-00	SP-00
	IRM-00	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-00	NCTC-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00
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C O N F I D E N T I A L AIT TAIPEI 001447

STATE FOR EAP/TC

STATE PASS USTR FOR STRATFORD AND ALTBACH, TREASURY FOR OASIA/WINSHIP AND JEWELL, NSC FOR LOI, COMMERCE FOR 4431/ITA/MAC/AP/OPB/TAIWAN, USDA FOR FAS/OSTA BLUM, BEAN, AND DAWSON; FAS/OCRA RADLER, BURDETT, AND BEILLARD; FAS/OFSO SALLYARDS; APHIS/IS AND VS; AND FSIS/HARRIES

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/07/2019

TAGS: ECON EAGR ETRD PGOV PREL TW

SUBJECT: TAIWAN LEGISLATURE RESUMES DISCUSSION OF U.S. BEEF AMENDMENT

REF: A. TAIPEI 1373 AND PREVIOUS

1B. TAIPEI 1437 (NOTAL)

Classified By: Bill Stanton, AIT Director, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: In response to the party's relatively poor performance in the December 5 local elections, the KMT has revived legislative debate over a Food Sanitation Act amendment that would restrict imports of certain U.S. beef products. Separately, a consumer NGO took an initial step toward a possible island-wide referendum on renegotiating the bilateral beef protocol with the U.S. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) On December 7, National Security Council Secretary General Su Chi contacted the Director to report that Legislative Yuan (LY) Speaker Wang Jin-pyng had renewed efforts to amend the Food Sanitation Act to prevent the import of U.S. beef offal, ground beef, and other beef products seen as risky by the Taiwan public (ref a). In separate December 8 conversations with AIT staff, aides in the offices of KMT legislators Lu Hsueh-chang and Justin Chou confirmed that the ruling party had renewed negotiations with the DPP over amending the Act.

13. (C) Lu's aide explained that the new version of the amendment would be designed to ban imports of U.S. beef offal, ground beef, spinal cord, and other "risky" items. Nathan Gao, a legislative aide to Chou, offered a similar report. The KMT's relatively poor performance in the December 5 local elections (ref b), he explained, prompted the party to revive efforts to amend the Food Sanitation Act in a way seen as responsive to public concerns about the safety of U.S. beef. Gao stressed, however, that the KMT was still in the initial stages of negotiating language with the DPP, and that no legislative action was imminent.

¶4. (SBU) Separately, staff at the Taipei-based Consumer Foundation NGO told us that their organization submitted a beef protocol petition to the Central Election Commission (CEC) on the morning of December 8. If approved, the petition would eventually authorize a national referendum on whether or not to renegotiate the beef protocol with the U.S.

The Consumer Foundation expected the CEC to complete an initial review of the petition within approximately ten days.

Provided the CEC approves the initial petition, the Foundation would then move to the next step in the petition process and attempt to increase the number of petition signatures from the current approximately 200,000 to the required total of 860,000.

¶5. (C) COMMENT: Although the beef issue did not play a central role in the December 5 elections, the KMT's performance was weak enough to resurrect the Food Sanitation Act amendment. Although the legislative effort may fizzle once again, reports that the amendment may explicitly restrict certain U.S. beef imports are a worrying new development. We will continue to stress our concerns that any legislation remain consistent with the bilateral beef protocol, and that Taiwan not codify administrative measures that would have the effect of overturning the expanded access to which it has already agreed. END COMMENT.

STANTON